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Training and Research: United Nations Institute for Training and Research

United Nations Institute for Training and Research

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report has been prepared in compliance with General Assembly resolution 52/206 of 18 December 1997 on the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) in which, *inter alia*, the Assembly welcomed the initiative of the Board of Trustees and the Executive Director to explore the possibilities for the Institute to become a partner of the agencies and bodies of the United Nations system with respect to their training programmes, especially for developing countries and countries with economies in transition, consistent with the division of labour. The Assembly also requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Institute, as well as with the United Nations funds and programmes, to explore ways and modalities to utilize systematically the Institute in the execution of training and capacity-building programmes, and to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session on the implementation of the resolution.

2. The Secretary-General has followed closely the completion of the restructuring process of the Institute. A senior officer has been appointed as a focal point within the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and moreover, the Secretary-General has been represented at all recent sessions of the UNITAR Board of Trustees.

3. The present report deals with issues relating to the development of the programmes in cooperation with other institutions within and outside the United Nations, respecting a flexible and effective division of labour as proposed by the Joint Inspection Unit and systematic utilization of UNITAR in the execution of training and capacity-building programmes.

Development of programmes and inter-agency cooperation

4. It should be noted that, in resolution 52/206 the General Assembly recalled the growing importance of training activities and stressed the need for strengthening cooperation among relevant national, regional and international institutions. Over the last several months, the training and capacity-building programmes of UNITAR have continued to increase rather rapidly. The present average is 10 different training programmes per month, conducted in developing countries at United Nations Headquarters and at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and at Vienna. Further developments in this regard can be found in the report of the Executive Director of UNITAR to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session.[1]

5. UNITAR cooperates with several national, regional and international institutes for the design and conduct of its projects. Within the United Nations, consultations and joint programmes have been organized through the Secretariat (the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, particularly the secretariats of the Conventions) and with programmes such as the United

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Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), the United Nations University and the International Court of Justice. At the level of the United Nations system, UNITAR has managed to build partnerships in training and institution-building with the International Labour Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and the World Meteorological Organization in the field of environmental training, with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and with the International Telecommunication Union in the design and conduct of training programmes in modern information technologies. For multilateral trade diplomacy training, cooperative links have been established with the World Trade Organization and the World Intellectual Property Organization, as well as with United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. Finally, UNITAR has recommenced joint training programmes with the World Bank in New York and is developing potential training projects with the Bretton Woods institutions in the framework of its debt and international finance management training. Inter-agency cooperation has been one of the main features and perhaps the key to the success of the restructuring process of UNITAR.

6. The recent encouraging trend of inter-agency cooperation is certainly the result of UNITAR's efforts to strengthen its links with regional and national training and research institutions in developing countries of Africa, Asia and the Pacific and Latin America. Efforts will also have to be made to increase collaboration with relevant institutions in countries with economies in transition.

Systematic utilization of the services of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research

7. The General Assembly, in paragraph 10 of resolution 52/206, supported the idea of UNITAR becoming a partner of the agencies and bodies of the United Nations system with respect to their training and capacity-building programmes in Member States.

8. In this connection, some progress has been made. UNDP as an implementing agency of the Global Environment Fund (GEF) has designated UNITAR as its executing agency for an important GEF-funded programme. The cooperation is developing well and further enlargement is expected. In addition, UNFPA, in charge of the follow up to the International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo in 1994, is co-sponsoring a training programme on the law and diplomacy of international migration. Bilateral donors have also been joining these initiatives. This is certainly a positive development. The Executive Director of UNITAR will follow up with the Executive Heads and Senior Staff of these funds and programmes.

9. The actual achievements of UNITAR during and since the restructuring process have been positive and encouraging. It has brought together several different partners who have given constant and full support to UNITAR: the General Assembly, in particular its Second Committee, which debated each year on the various issues at stake, and the Member States, in particular the donor and developing countries, that benefit most from the Institute's activities. The Board of Trustees of UNITAR has followed with dedication and competence the evolution of the Institute, giving guidance and assistance to the Executive Director. Support has also been received from United Nations bodies such as the Joint Inspection Unit, the United Nations Board of Auditors and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. The Secretariat, both at Headquarters and at the United Nations Office at Geneva has also brought its active support to UNITAR.

10. With regard to other matters pertaining to UNITAR, and in connection with paragraph 3 of resolution 52/206, by which the General Assembly renewed its appeal to all Governments and to private institutions that had not yet contributed financially or otherwise to the Institute to give it their generous financial and other support, and urged the States that interrupted their voluntary contributions to consider resuming them in the light of the successful restructuring and revitalization of the Institute, it is useful to note that a large-scale fund-raising effort was launched by UNITAR with the direct involvement of the Members of the Board of Trustees. Positive results are appearing but contributions remain modest at present. Nevertheless, UNITAR has managed to develop its programmes and to maintain a balanced budget. Since the beginning of the restructuring process, the administrative costs of the Institute and all its operational activities have been self-funded, by voluntary contributions, grants and special purpose agreements. The Secretary-General wishes again to call upon all Member States to generously support the Institute.

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 14* (A/53/14).